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AFGHANISTAN

Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI)

SUCCESS STORY

Bowling Up Opportunities in Kandahar

CCI partnered with the Kandahar Provincial Department of Sports and Olympics to bring a youth cricket tournament to Kandahar City.



[USAID/OTI]

The Director of the Department of Sports and Olympics presents jerseys to a team captain.

The seven day cricket tournament provided an opportunity for youth from across Kandahar City to come together to interact and compete in a positive activity, which also connected them to their local government representatives.

Sports in Afghanistan are a well-established way of attracting youth and community participation in district events. In volatile or underserved sub-districts of Kandahar City, however, these types of gatherings are the exception rather than the rule due to the unstable environment. Keeping in mind cricket's burgeoning popularity and the lack of opportunities for youth in Kandahar City, the USAID/OTI-funded Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI) partnered with the Provincial Department of Sports and Olympics and the Kandahar Cricket Board to host a city-wide cricket tournament in one of the city's most underserved areas, Municipal Sub-District Nine.

During October 2012, the Kandahar City Mayor, the Department of Sports and Olympics and CCI worked together to organize a seven-day cricket tournament between eight local teams. The event was attended by 96 youth competitors and 250 observers. Two local television stations and one local newspaper also covered the competition's results, spreading the impact of the activity to areas outside of Kandahar City.

Throughout the event, youth from across the city were able to interact and compete in a healthy activity. At the end of the seven match competition, the winning team, with a final match score of 138, was the Ahmad Shahi Cricket Team from Sub-District Six. Representatives from the winning team received trophies and certificates of recognition from the Director of Sports and Olympics. In addition, tournament participants received cricket uniforms and sports equipment, encouraging future matches and interaction.

During the closing ceremony, a player from the winning team stated, "This activity encourages youth to come together to embrace sports instead drug and crimes." Through the funding and implementation of a youth cricket tournament, CCI successfully provided this opportunity to youth throughout Kandahar City.